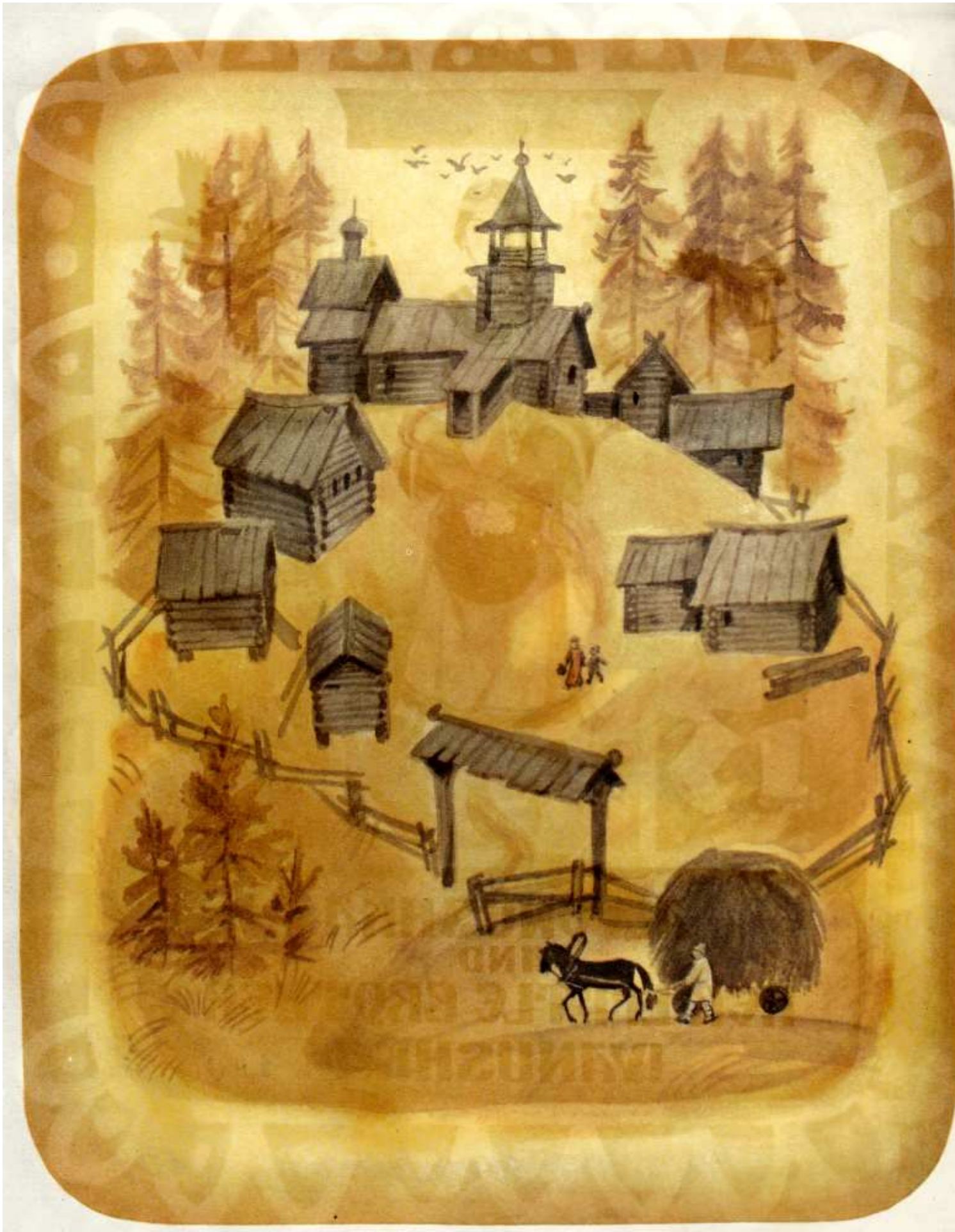
ALYONUSHKA
AND
HER LITTLE BROTHER
IVANUSHKA



Once upon a time there lived an old man and an old woman, and they had a daughter named Alyonushka and a little brother named Ivanushka.

The two old people died, and Alyonushka and Ivanushka were left all alone.

One day Alyonushka set out to work in the field and she took Ivanushka with her. They had a long way to go and a wide field to cross, and after a while Ivanushka felt very thirsty.

"I'm dreadfully thirsty, Sister Alyonushka!" he said.

"Wait, little brother, we're sure to come to a well soon," Alyonushka replied.

On they went. They walked and they walked. They felt very hot and weary too, but it couldn't be helped, as well they knew, for the sun burned bright but no well was in sight.

By and by they came upon a cow's hoof filled with water.

"I think I'll drink a little water out of the hoof, Alyonushka," Ivanushka said.

"Oh no, you mustn't do that, little brother, or you'll turn into a calf."

Ivanushka obeyed and on they walked. They felt very hot and weary too, but it couldn't be helped, as well they knew, for the sun burned bright but no well was in sight.

By and by they came upon a horse's hoof filled with water.

"I think I'll drink a little water out of the hoof, Alyonushka," Ivanushka said.

"Oh no, you mustn't do that, little brother, or you'll turn into a foal."

Ivanushka sighed, but there was nothing to be done so on they walked.

They felt very hot and weary too, but it couldn't be helped, as well they knew, for the sun burned bright but no well was in sight.

By and by they came upon a goat's hoof filled with water.

"I must have some water, Alyonushka, I can't bear it any longer!" Ivanushka said.

"Oh no, you mustn't drink it, little brother, or you'll turn into a kid."

But Ivanushka disobeyed. He drank some water from the goat's hoof, and no sooner had he done so than he turned into a little white goat.

Alyonushka called to her brother, but instead of Ivanushka the Little White Goat came running up to her.

Alyonushka burst out crying. She sat down on the ground by a stack of hay and she wept and sobbed, and the Little White Goat skipped round playfully.

Just then who should chance to come riding by but a Merchant.

"What are you crying for, bonny lass?" he asked.

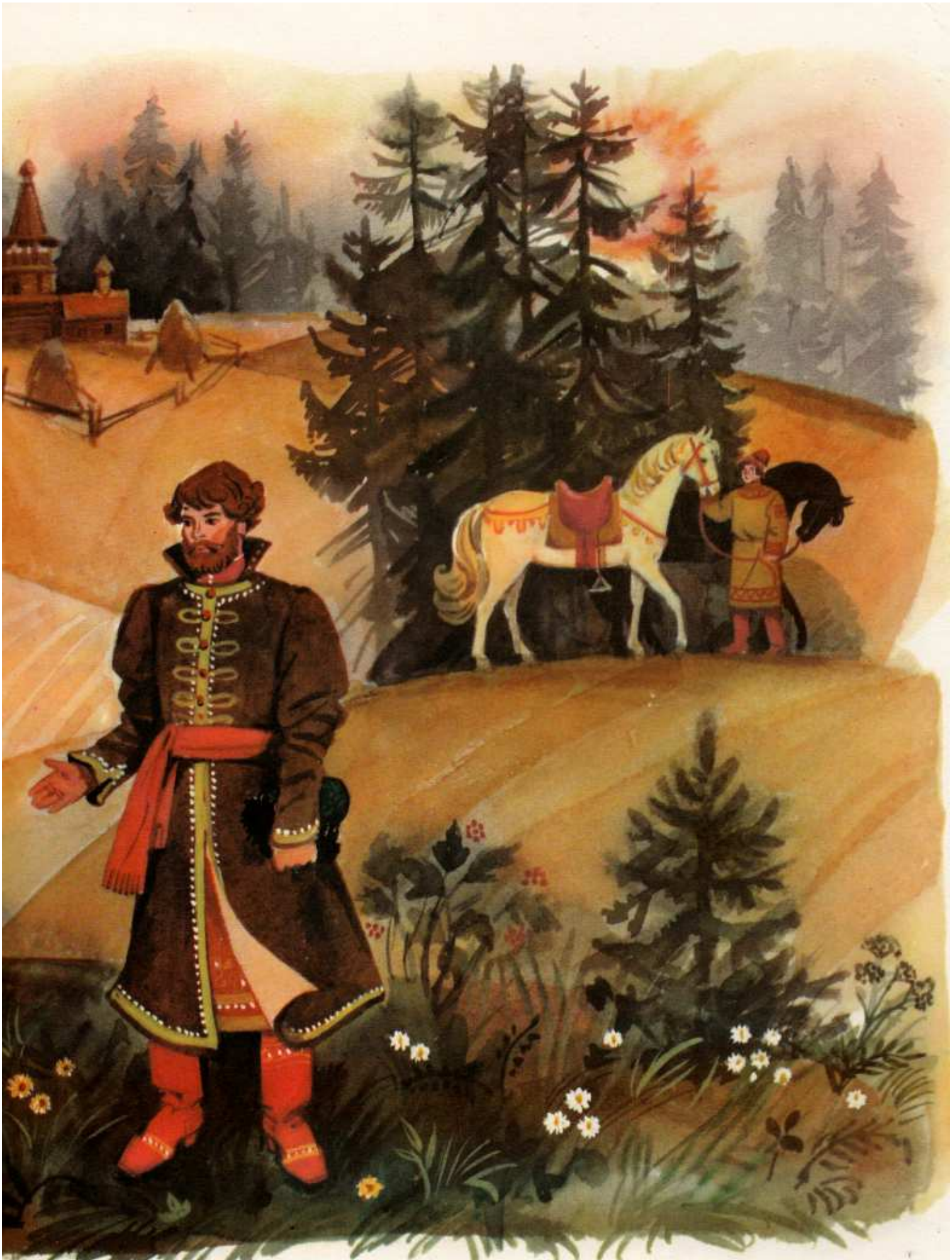
Alyonushka told him of her trouble, and the Merchant said:

"Be my wife, bonny lass! I will dress you in gold and silver, and the Little White Goat will live with us."

Alyonushka thought it over and agreed to marry the Merchant.

They were married soon after and they lived together very happily, and the Little White Goat lived with them and ate and drank out of Alyonushka's own cup.

One day the Merchant happened to be away, and all of a sudden as if out of nowhere a witch appeared. She came up to



Alyonushka's window and begged her ever so sweetly to go bathing in the river with her.

Alyonushka agreed, and the Witch led her to the river, but when they got there, she fell upon her, tied a stone round her neck and threw her into the water. Then she made herself look just like Alyonushka, dressed herself in Alyonushka's clothes and went to her house instead of her. No one guessed who she was, not even the Merchant who came home soon after.

Only the Little White Goat knew what had happened. He hung his head and refused to touch food or drink. He never left the river bank, morning or evening, and, standing at the water's edge, called out:

"Alyonushka, my sister, can you hear me?
Swim out to me, swim out to me."

The Witch learned about this and she asked her husband the Merchant to slaughter the Little White Goat.

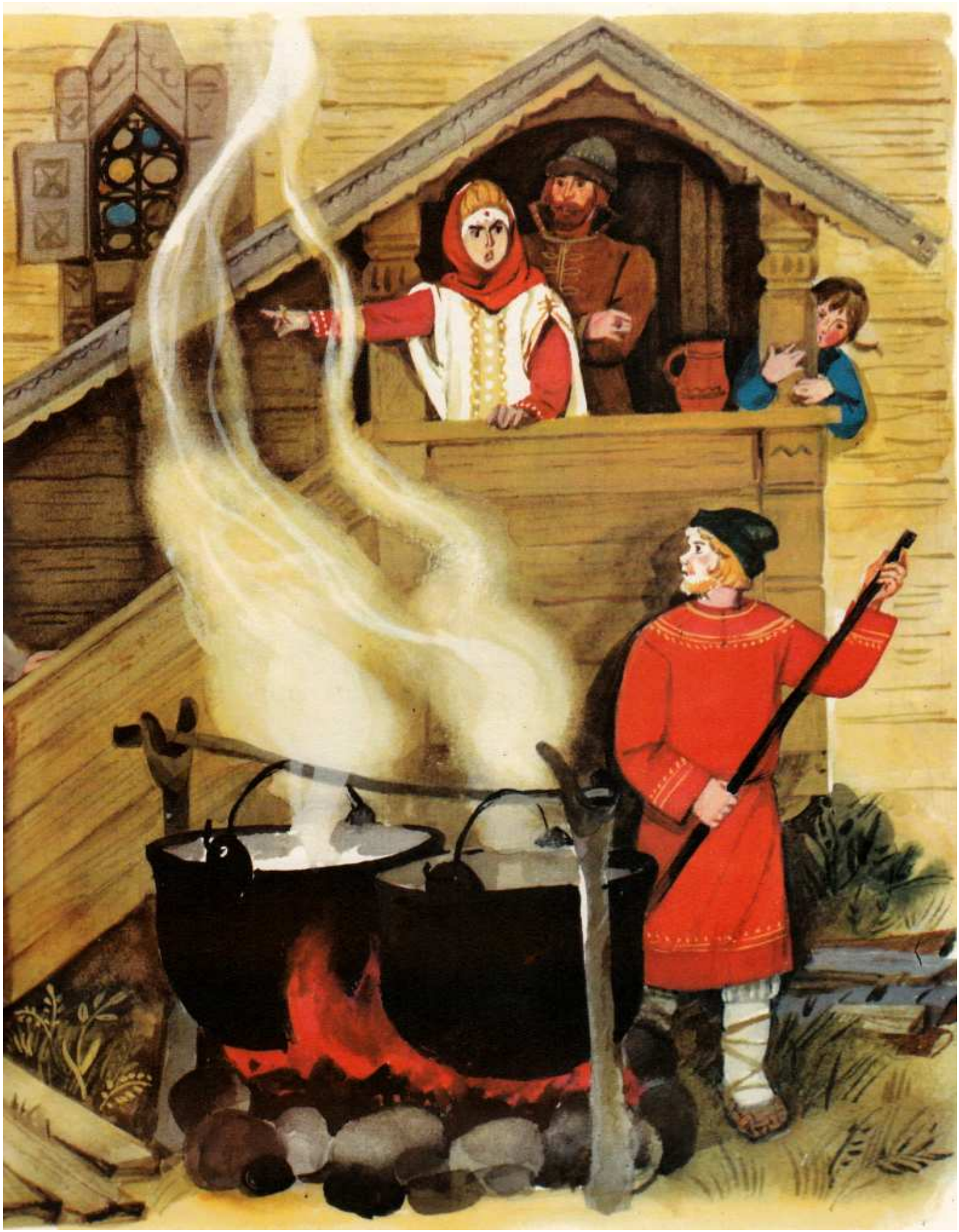
Now, the Merchant was loath to do this, for he had grown fond of the Little White Goat and felt sorry for him. But the Witch kept at him day and night, she coaxed and she wheedled, and he gave in at last.

"You do away with him yourself," he said.

The Witch then had big fires made up, huge pots heated and great knives sharpened.

Learning that he had not long to live, the Little White Goat said to the Merchant:

"You have been like a father to me. Heed my last wish and let me go to the river before I die, to have a drink of water."



The Merchant let him go, and the Little White Goat ran to the river, stood on the bank and called out in piteous tones:

"Alyonushka, my sister, can you hear me?
Swim out to me, swim out to me.
Big fires are blazing,
Huge pots are boiling,
Great knives are gleaming,
Ready to slaughter me."

And Alyonushka called back to him out of the river:

"Ivanushka, my brother, can you hear me?
A heavy stone presses down on me,
Silken grasses entangle my legs,
Yellow sands lie on my breast."

The Witch went to look for the Little White Goat, but she could not find him, so she sent a servant in search of him.

"Bring the Little White Goat to me!" she said.

The servant went to the river, and what did he see but the Little White Goat running up and down the bank and calling in piteous tones:

"Alyonushka, my sister, can you hear me?
Swim out to me, swim out to me.
Big fires are blazing,
Huge pots are boiling,
Great knives are gleaming,
Ready to slaughter me."

And from the river came the reply:

"Ivanushka, my brother, can you hear me?
A heavy stone presses down on me.
Silken grasses entangle my legs,
Yellow sands lie on my breast."

The servant ran home and told the Merchant what he had heard and seen. People gathered, they went down to the river and, casting a silken net, dragged Alyonushka out onto the bank. They removed the stone that was round her neck, dipped her in fresh water taken from a spring and dressed her in pretty clothes. Alyonushka came back to life, and she looked more beautiful than ever.

And the Little White Goat was so happy that he turned three somersaults, and lo and behold!—he turned into Little Ivanushka once again.

And as for the wicked Witch, she was tied to a horse's tail, and the horse was turned loose in an open field.

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AND HER LITTLE BROTHER
IVANUSHKA

A Russian Folk Tale

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